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ABSTRACT

This study investigating school administrator career patterns focused on entry, promotion, and position permanency as it affects both men and women and examines factors affecting the careers of women in an attempt to explain the relative absence of women in hierarchical educational administrative positions. Data were collected from historical records, biographical sketches, and interviews with administrators and citizens in the Riverside Unified School District (California). Findings confirmed the importance of several theoretical concepts found in the literature. The processes of sponsorship, differential recruitment, sex power differential, and double deviancy emerged as influential components for career development. The study revealed three career possibilities. The first is to be plateau administrators who do not want to rise from low-level positions. The second is to be vertical aspirants who are upwardly mobile. The third is to become place holders who are blocked in their ascendancy. It was concluded that women faced more barriers to advancement to administrative positions than did men. Suggestions for means of overcoming these barriers include good formal preparation, sponsorship, knowledge and use of informal organizational networks, and steady employment patterns.
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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION CAREERS

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By

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School Administration Careers

Careers are established when people focus upon an occupational goal, acquire the necessary training and experience to enter that occupation and adapt themselves to the organization's expectations. Career patterns are developed when individuals recognize the continuity of related jobs in their lives and view such jobs as a sequence of positions which help them assess conditions which will enable them to enter chosen areas, retain their positions or advance within the hierarchy of an organization. The sequence develops from several positions within a broad but well defined category such as medicine, law, or school organizations.

Within school organizations two primary careers have been delineated: teaching and administration. Factors which influence, alter, or reinforce personal choices and organizational needs result in identifiable career patterns and sharply divergent career pathways.

Problem Statement

This study investigates two aspects of school administrator career patterns.

1. One aspect is concerned with entry, promotion, and position permanency as it affects both men and women within the organization. There appears to be continuous assignment and reassignment of individuals to designated building site and central office positions. The building site positions include principalships at the elementary, middle school/

junior high school, and senior high school levels. The central office as an organization provides positions for policy-makers and decision-makers, for subordinates who are responsible for implementation of the decisions and for additional subordinates who carry out the instructions for implementation. This study examines factors which lead to the establishment of administrative school career positions and the career patterns of individuals who assume those positions.

2. Previous studies indicate a decline of women in administration, societal attitudes toward men and women in administrative posts and comparisons of job performance of men and women. This study addresses factors which affect the careers of women in an attempt to explain the relative absence of women in hierarchical educational administrative positions.

Theoretical Framework

The present report is directed at factors involved in the entry into school administration positions and in administrative career development. Career patterns from both an individual and an organizational point of view are examined and there is an emphasis on the differences found in career patterns of men and women. Four concepts from the literature reviewed were critical to formulating a theoretical framework which guided much of the data collection and analysis.

The interdependence of those who are established in an organization with those who are just entering is explained in terms of sponsorship, a process whereby individuals are identified, recommended and then assisted

in their efforts to become incorporated into organizational life. The recruitment process is a necessary base on which to build an understanding of sponsorship and a subsequent study of career patterns. Etzioni (1964) points out that most people in organizations have the requisite psychological characteristics for organizational life partly because of selective recruitment, a method which the organization uses to prevent entry or remove those whose personalities make them unfit to participate.

Admission and entry processes, then, are dependent upon the selective recruitment and sponsorship processes which in turn operate in hierarchic promotion and result in a sponsor-protege relationship which Pavalko (1971) believes is crucial for male upward mobility but may inhibit female advancement in professions.

Organization characteristics are examined to determine the relationship to the entry and admission processes. Recognizing that the literature related to organization theory and research is mainly a study of male society since most of the positions of power and leadership are occupied by men, attention is directed to Acker and Van Houten's (1974) sex power differential concept which may help explain the absence of women in roles other than those which are subordinate to the positions of power and decision-making. Acker and Van Houten suggest, along with Caplow (1954), that there is sex structuring in organizations, which consists of differentiation of female and male jobs, and a hierarchical ordering of those jobs so that males are not expected to take orders from females.

Attention is focussed on double deviancy, a term Laws (1976) uses for individuals who do not fit the constraints of the socially ascribed

identity, who do adopt the standards applied to members of the dominant group and who try to actualize the esteemed qualities associated with the dominant group.

Individuals, once accepted in an organization, tend to remain within it but movement is subject to many influences outside individual and normal control. Dalton (1959) has identified several influences which pertain to the effects of rivalries for personal success: the limited number and organizational characteristics of positions, the interaction of those within the organization with each other, and organizational and societal demands and expectations. These influences appear to minimize the formal ways of advancing and encourage the informal.

One thrust of this paper is concerned with entry, promotion and position permanency as it affects both men and women within the organization. Not all career moves are upwardly mobile, but little attention has been given to reclassification of individuals which helps them maintain their status within the organization and at the same time protects the organization's investment in them as well as the image of the original sponsors. Dalton proposed that when the decision-makers believe it is to the advantage of the organization, positions within the organization will be created for individuals which will not endanger the individuals' salary and status, will protect the organization's investment in them, will protect the image of the original sponsor and will lead to the institutionalization of the newly created positions within the organization.

The other thrust of this paper attempts to explain why women are generally absent from hierarchical positions. It is expected that selective

recruitment and sponsorship processes, the sex power differential and problems related to double deviancy will emerge as control factors which facilitate or hinder professional advancement for women. It is proposed that if women apply for positions without sponsorship of a person in the hierarchical group and if the selective recruitment processes do not essentially require services of women due to the job descriptions or affirmative action pressure, then women will have little hope of securing decision-making positions due to the control mechanisms of the sex power differential and problems related to double deviancy.

Research Methodology and Setting

Data for this study were collected from historical records, interviews and biographical sketches. Historical records (school board minutes, publications of others, school directories and newspaper articles) were examined in order to ascertain who held administrative positions, for how long, and the patterns of promotion, transfer, termination or position permanency within a specified geographic area and over a particular span of time.

The historical data cover the time span since colonization of the Riverside area in 1870 and encompasses information from historical records in five year intervals in the examination of 1265 individuals as they moved through positions. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, information other than that collected through historical data was considered necessary. The intent was to collect data which would reflect the present status of school careers. One hundred-ten personal interviews were conducted with the administrators and citizens currently employed

in the county, administrators on retired or terminated status, and citizens who have been closely associated with the school careers of administrators.

The following types of data were collected: (1) occupational background of parents, (2) current active/retired work status, (3) approximate age, (4) district of employment, (5) sex, (6) ethnicity, (7) mobility factors which caused individuals to move from or remain in certain positions, (8) career aspirations, (9) whether careers had been interrupted, and if so, for what reasons, (10) early encouragement, (11) sponsorship, (12) number and types of assignments, (13) longevity of assignments, (14) influence of superintendents, (15) home pressures, (16) formal training, (17) mobility blockage, (18) leisure and civic activities.

An item analysis was employed in the analysis of five types of demographic data which was secured from all participants: (1) approximate age of respondents, (2) current active/retired work status, (3) sex, (4) ethnicity, and (5) formal training. Responses, some of which were extensive, were then extracted from the interview data for the remaining categories and are represented in the body of the analysis. Several career profiles and biographical sketches were drawn in detail because of their historical importance, impact on careers of others or points of emphasis for the study.

The urban setting of Riverside and six other communities within the county provide the geographic and historical background for the major section of this work which deals with career patterns. Communities were specifically selected in order that the range of socio-economic index and

life-styles would be represented: an urban/industrial area, a high SES area, an indland agricultural region, a small desert community, an outlying community far removed from the county seat and two suburban communities.

Because data for this study have been gathered in an identified county and many of the participants are currently employed or living within the area, care has been given to the protection of individuals when sensitive topics have been discussed and when particular sections have been quoted verbatim. Anonymity has been maintained for all persons except those specified in biographical sketches.

Findings

For communities which have a fairly recent history of a century or so, and where individuals can relate to the varied life styles and occupational opportunities similar to those offered in Riverside County, it is believed that the factors identified and described in this study would, in general, hold true.

Career Pathways. It is soon after the first entry level position that administrators create two career pathways. One group can be described as career persons who believe they have achieved their aspirations after the initial placement in administration and cease to actively seek positions of greater responsibility or challenge. The other group is composed of aspirants who see the superintendency at the apex of the hierarchy and determine to occupy that position.

Characteristics of Plateau Administrators. In this report the term plateau aspirant is used to refer to all school administrators who are

stabilized and, in most cases, are permanently assigned to a level or title after initial placement in administrative positions. Such permanency of assignment focusses interest upon the ways in which they maintain their positions over a period of time. Plateau aspirants are similar to Carlson's (1972) place-bound superintendents who found whatever position they were in as an end in itself and only gradually escalated occupational aspirations.

Studies related to mobility of school administrators have concentrated on elementary principals. This may be because of the accessibility of data and may also be influenced by the fact that there are more elementary than secondary principals in school systems. It can be stated as a generalization that elementary principals are primarily plateau administrators. From the comments of elementary school principals to Becker (1970: 4,5), they generally view their positions as subprofessionals rather than as administrators with full status. The elementary principal appears to be isolated from the involvement in group decision-making and this in turn affects his leadership style and ultimately his career pattern, Becker concluded. The position emerges as the terminal job for teachers who have moved through the ranks and is a position which seems secure in most cases as long as one does not create a leadership crisis situation.

Factors which lead to permanency in the elementary principalship also lead to institutionalization of that position. Plateau administrators tend to be stabilized in their positions after initial placement and are only one step removed from teaching. They virtually spend their entire careers in the same district. Those few who have administrative experience outside the district have had short term positions.

Plateau administrators tend to terminate graduate study after they have met the criteria for continued employment. They indicate that they are disinterested in "taking any more courses." Obliquely or explicitly, plateau administrators reinforce the thought that they are "pretty careful with time" used after "the regular work day" for professional duties.

During the work day, however, plateau administrators are 'school-bound.' They tend to scurry back to their schools or offices--their worlds--immediately after meetings, conferences or workshops rather than congregate with a group of colleagues to discuss overt and covert implications and directions covered in those meetings and vital therefore for upwardly mobile people to internalize.

Nearly all administrators have been teachers as part of their career pattern, and among plateau administrators there was some ambiguity regarding their departure from teaching and their entry into administration. Plateau administrators nearing retirement frequently reminisce about their teaching experiences and hope that before they retire, they can teach a few years and "have fun again." Repeatedly, such administrators paraphrase, "I'm a teacher first." Elementary principals voice ambiguous feelings about their staff relationships. Within their own building, they feel they no longer belong to the teachers' group. The teachers on one hand express a wish for the principal to fraternize and on the other hand behave in such a manner that the principal feels he is kept at arm's length. Disparaging remarks made by teachers about authority figures in general and school administrators --especially central office personnel--in particular contribute to a confused role for building principals who still view themselves as "teachers first."

Based on related literature (Wolcott:1973, Becker:1970, Carlson:1972) and also on the findings of this study, plateau administrators are likely to maintain their positions over a period of time as long as they conform to district policies, maintain smooth performance in their jobs, and do not draw attention to themselves in either a positive or negative way thereby inviting district office or Board scrutiny. Plateau administrators who violate the criteria are likely to find themselves moved to place-holding positions or in severe cases, may be ejected from the organization.

A person who does not conform to the group's standards is a threat to the existence of the group (principals' group, district office protocol, Board of Education's expectations). Those who tend to be deviant but who wish to stay with the group learn to conform and are therefore socialized into the organization. Homans (1950) refers to this process as a maintenance of equilibrium. "They told me to sit down and be quiet. I did and I have (been quiet)." Another commented, "Hell- if they don't meet my needs, I'll quit. I'll go back to the classroom. They're not going to push me around." Those principals who are socialized into the plateau group maintain a low profile, follow the rules, and view the school site as their home base, their world. Principals stated privately and two stated in principals' meetings that they wish central office administrators "would leave them alone," and "not continue to pile on work loads and interfere with the daily job of running a school." Another asked in a meeting, "Why don't you (central office) take on the business of collective bargaining and leave us principals alone to run our schools?"

Characteristics of Vertical Aspirants. For clarity of comparison, upwardly mobile administrators are designated as vertical aspirants as compared to plateau aspirants whose career patterns tend to become permanent after initial entry into administration. Vertical aspirants indicate highly selective involvement in community activities. Most of the contacts are related to community service clubs or to top social organizations in the community. The community activities require little additional time beyond the attendance at the meetings and functions. Only a few years ago, administrators would have been observed carefully for involvement in religious activities in the community. Church membership or attendance appears to have little impact upon upward career mobility at this time. The majority of administrators have a low profile of religious activities. In the districts studied, there is a general understanding that the Protestant ethic is dominant for those who do mention religious affiliations.

Upwardly mobile individuals deal with expected conformity of the organizational image by living within guidelines which will get positive notice from superiors and acceptance from peers and allow themselves room for personal and professional growth within those constraints. An illustration might be length of working day. The organizational image requires that the administrator work as long as it takes to get a job done. This usually means longer hours than in the previous position. District office executives expect the hours to be long but when attention is drawn to an administrator who works hours above and beyond organizational expectations, an administrator's competence, organizational skills or personal home life

stability are questioned. Colleagues view the work ethic attitude as a threat and excessive working hours over a period of time detract from the personal and professional life of a person. It is important, therefore, for the administrator to conform within certain guidelines and still get the tasks completed which will encourage vertical career movement.

Vertical aspirants become involved in areas which show high quality performance and become knowledgeable of the activities of the next echelon. In pursuing graduate studies and accepting extra professional responsibilities, they gain attention of and begin to exert some influence of opinion on their peers. They consciously support their colleagues in meetings but take care not to offend their superiors by doing so. Their language pattern reflects mediation in their efforts to be non abrasive. An example of such a response was made in a principals' meeting:

> _____ has a good point. He and some of the others have broached this topic before and if there is any way we can be of service to the district by implementing this idea, I'd be willing to serve on a committee to study the possibilities.

Upon moving into administration, vertical aspirants quickly separate themselves from their previous group and identify with the organization they represent. In reference to negative comments purportedly made by staff members about a curriculum project, a new administrator remarked, "The teachers are going to have to realize that they're making demands the district can't support." The district rather than the school site becomes the focus of their career. They no longer identify themselves as "teachers first"; not only do they know their place in the hierarchy but the demands of the next position, the goals of the expanding hierarchy

and an awareness of the pathway for reaching their own aspirations. "You get there by outlining your goals," advised one of the participants, "and then working your butt off to reach them."

The mobility factor is a major one for aspirants who want to move from entry level positions to the superintendency. The pattern includes several components: longevity in a particular assignment, types and frequency of reassignments, advancement in the hierarchy, and inter-district assignments. Eight percent of those interviewed say they "cannot think of spending a career in a community," and that "when you realize you're putting down roots, you have to make a decision." Such comments were made by men involved in rapid vertical mobility. For those who were aspiring to higher echelon positions, the decision to move on to another community is based on a good offer rather than on family and community ties.

Institutionalization of Central Office Positions. As the review of related literature indicates, positions of the principalship and superintendency are understood and institutionalized as part of school organization. Aside from the superintendency, other central office (district office) positions are relatively new and are in the process of being institutionalized which helps to explain the fluctuating roles, titles, and hierarchical status of these positions. The County School Directory first listed titled positions of directorships and assistant superintendencies in 1940. In subsequent years, the titles of coordinators, deputy superintendents, associate superintendents, administrators, "assistants to", and administrative assistants have been added to organizational listings for central office personnel.

Central Office Positions. The data show that teacher/administrator turn-over in the late 1800s and early 1900s was frequent but that as mid-century approached, teacher/administrator stability and longevity in the districts developed. Not only did the increase of student population over a period of time necessitate additional staff members at the central office level, but the need for the Board and Superintendent to maintain equilibrium of the organization by creating spaces for certain individuals emerged and developed as part of the organizational protocol. This need was two-fold. First, assigning individuals to positions where they would be observed and groomed for positions of greater responsibility has been commonly acknowledged as a route for vertical mobility for individuals and these positions have been sought after by aspirants as well as offered as rewards or motivation by the organization. In such instances, assignments to positions are viewed as promotions.

The other need is that of creating spaces for certain individuals who remain in a district over a period of time and who begin to interfere with the expectations and performance of the organization. A process identified in this paper as moving individuals to place-holding positions is then initiated by the superintendent. Individuals are moved from building site responsibilities and given assignments of less visibility and/or responsibility for a variety of reasons. The reasons may include incompetence, loss of sponsorship, public relations problems, controversy over a particular incident or issue, health problems or career intrusions which were created by individuals, such as indiscretions in their personal lives. Such assignments are viewed as an effort on the part of the organization to

maintain its equilibrium and at the same time protect the status of the individual within the work organization, the organization's investment in the individual, and the image of the individual's sponsor in the organization. In most instances, the assignment is viewed as a demotion or as a lateral transfer by the recipient and by colleagues, even though members of the hierarchy publicly make reassuring statements about the status of the individual and the organization's need for the individual's assignment to that position.

Because, for the most part, these positions are valued by the hierarchy as short term for various individuals, there has been no effort to institutionalize them in the same manner as the superintendency. Roles are not formalized but will vary from district to district and from year to year depending upon the needs of the hierarchy and the propensities of the place-holder.

Emergence of New School Level (Building Site) Positions. In much the same way, the positions of principalships and directorships of adult education, community high school and continuation have developed at the building site level. In nearly all cases, these positions are held by former teachers or administrators who for one reason or another, have been moved from their positions by the superintendent. Administrators who find themselves out of favor or in opposition to the superintendent's philosophy have little prestige in which to muster support when they hold these jobs. Administrators themselves view the positions as "pasture jobs" and believe they hold positions which are out of the mainstream of the organization. Often, they are omitted from mailing lists and directories by oversight,

and frequently are not included in seminars and workshops. They may be paid as directors, vice principals, or elementary/junior high principals and therefore do not have a formalized position. Never do they have the prestige, salary or visibility of the high school principal although they work with and are assigned formally as participants in the high school group. Their career pathways, at this point, are determined by the needs of the organization.

Career Determination

Influence of Organization. Place-holders, then, are individuals in the organization who were once recognized, observed, groomed, sponsored, established in a career and then, as a result of at least one of the factors listed in the hypotheses, lost the confidence of superiors and the influence of colleagues. On a continuum, their placement could be described:

T1= entry level into the organization (position is usually that of a teacher - occasionally a position such as psychologist), T2= the period at which the individual was recognized, observed and sponsored into the administrative ranks, T3= acquisition and establishment of career and evident confidence of superiors, T4= loss of superior's confidence which results in place-holding positions, demotion or termination.

Without exception, individuals who have been moved to place-holding positions were once known as vertical aspirants. For various reasons, they experienced mobility blocks by their superiors or aspirational shifts because of their personal stresses and choices which caused members of the

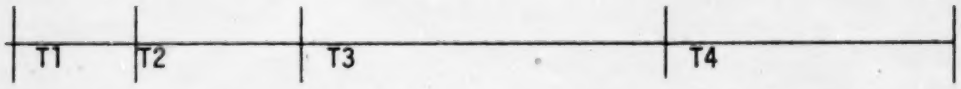
hierarchy to view them differently. All retain vestiges of regret and/or bitterness beneath the 'company person' facade. Organizations which have a high percentage of place-holders need to be aware of the potential problem of passive sabotage which can be created by disgruntled and blocked vertical aspirants. One district office administrator identified individuals who typify the place-holder category and said that up to 10 to 15 percent of the employees could be handled with ease as place-holders in a district. A composite statement of several individuals indicates that as the percentage of people who are demoted, transferred, or "kicked upstairs" increases, the commitment and loyalty to the organization decreases and the dissidents are more likely to surface and speak and act in opposition to the administration. Such behavior signals a need for tighter control on the part of the hierarchy or reorganization of the hierarchy with the probably effect of vertical aspirants leaving the organization.

Influence of Individual. Career pathways are individually determined as well as organizationally determined. Acquiring advanced education was upward mobility for 90 percent of the individuals in the study. Consequently the acquisition of the initial administrative assignment was judged as a career advancement. Personal satisfaction related to the advancement resulted in plateau stabilization and acted as a barrier to further vertical mobility for some individuals, unwillingness to move from one community to another, and reluctance to secure additional formal training. Family stresses affected the careers of all individuals. Whereas it has been commonly understood that married women cannot be expected to change jobs necessitating a family move to another community or to take on a greater

responsibility involving additional hours and pressure, or to return to graduate school when there are other family obligations, it was found in this study that the same stresses are placed upon men but are not so visibly reflected in the macro society. Career pathways are altered for both men and women because of the possible consequences to the stability of the family unit.

Differentiation for Men and Women. The difficulties women encounter are different from men only by degree. A continuum which indicates a career line for men may look like this:

For women, the continuum is likely to be:



The lines are not meant to have statistical accuracy but to indicate that recognition and sponsorship comes later for women and there is consequently less time in which to establish a career. Furthermore, women's careers are likely to be curtailed through individually and organizationally blocked mobility and/or loss of sponsorship. Two factors which apparently affect women, but not men, and contribute to the curtailment of professional advancement are the sex power differential and double deviancy.

The sex power differential as defined by Acker and Van Houten (1974) prevents women from attaining their full professional potential because policy-making and decision-making positions are held by men and women are expected to hold subordinate roles. One woman central office administrator who for many years was denied admission to the Superintendent's Council

pointed out that men who held similar positions in other districts were included in the Superintendent's Council in those districts. Furthermore, she identified men in her own district who held the same or lower rank who had been invited to be part of the Superintendent's Council.

In another instance, a superintendent offered a secondary principalship to a woman vice principal and withdrew the offer a few days later after a Superintendent's Council Meeting. Apologetically, he explained that the district just wasn't ready to place a woman at that level of administrative responsibility. He then secured her commitment to remain as vice principal and support the man who was to be transferred from another school and assigned as principal.

As Laws (1975) points out, a woman is regarded as a deviant because she violates the societal norm when she enters the administrative ranks. Even so, she may be accepted as a 'different kind of woman' by her colleagues and superiors as long as she holds a subordinate role, is competent, and behaves as the general society expects women to behave. However, when she emulates the expectations, roles, and behaviors of the dominant group, she is regarded "as something else again," and defined by Laws as a double deviant. The following example which was described in dissertation data and reported by Ortiz and Covel (1978) illustrates the concept of double deviancy.

During monthly principals' meetings in one of the districts, it was noted that very few women actively participate. Men generally dominated the meetings and presented points of view in an assertive manner. Their contributions were approved, elaborated, accepted or rejected. On the other

hand, women's comments were ignored or ridiculed. Therefore, women principals tended to be attentive, cooperative and quiet. One woman principal early in her principalship career was known to speak out in the meetings even if others contradicted, gave cursory acknowledgement or teased her. By the latter part of the year the associate superintendent in an informal discussion said, "I'm concerned about you. You're pretty vocal and come across really strong in the meetings. If I didn't know you so well and understood what you're really saying, I'd be worried about the way you come across." The woman responded by asking if she spoke too much or too emphatically. The associate superintendent was hesitant. "I'm not sure," he replied, "maybe both. Like I say, if I were a stranger and walked into the meeting, I'd be worried." The associate superintendent and principal had been long time colleagues and both had held a series of lower echelon positions in the district. His assertiveness was consistently applauded; her emulation of the behavior of the dominant group resulted in concern of those who had the power to give or limit her sponsorship for further vertical mobility.

Hypotheses

Plateau administrators have been identified as those individuals who gain initial entry into administration and tend to remain in lower level administrative positions. These occupational spaces may be organizationally and individually determined. For some administrators the initial entry is the fulfillment of their personal goals, representing further upward mobility than that achieved by other members of their family and establishing them with a peer group which is acceptable, responsive and comfortable. The other

plateau administrators find their careers are determined by the organization to the extent that personal aspirational efforts do not produce desired changes or promotions.

For the latter group of plateau administrators, loss of sponsorship produces a series of barriers for vertical mobility. Aspirants who continue to flourish do so with blessings and support of superiors who befriend, encourage and support individuals until they arrive in the decision-making ranks. Their vertical mobility attests to sponsorship mechanisms, in particular, as well as to the individuals' desires and motivations toward such activities.

When vertical aspirants find themselves in a plateau position and no longer able to move vertically, they become place-holders. At the central office level, those individuals are assigned to roles of director, coordinator, assistant or 'an assistant to.' At the school level, an example of a place-holding administrative assignment is director of adult education (community education) or continuation school.

Of the various formal and informal processes outlined in the hypotheses and developed in the study, male administrators are able to survive in the field even though one or more of the factors may be weak or missing. Adherence to formal organizational demands can be cited as an example. When male administrators do not comply to certain policies, expectations or rules, comments may be made but unless the lack of adherence is considered to be extensive, career stability is not found to be affected. Women, on the other hand, are labeled with derogatory terms and it appears necessary for them to prove commitment, loyalty and hard work beyond the norm for the dominant

group. Women who try to emulate the behavior of the dominant group of administrators (and therefore, are identified as double deviants) find themselves in a difficult situation of appearing aggressive, uncooperative and incompetent.

It is hypothesized that sponsorship for women is so critical in career development that should any factor interfere with its continuity, vertical mobility ceases. As women become more visible in their positions, risk of identification with the woman protegee becomes greater for the sponsor and sponsorship tends to take on a low profile or to be withdrawn.

It is believed, then, that the absence of women in school administration is directly related to the absence or loss of sponsorship and particularly accounts for the near absence of women in the decision-making, policy-making hierarchy of the organization.

Discussion

On a plateau level, administrative positions appear to be maintained through practice of the cliches of "not rocking the boat," and "keeping the head low," and "remembering that silence is golden." Some knowledge of and involvement in the informal network (even through informants) is important for administrators because otherwise it would be difficult to know when to quietly move from one philosophic position to another as the Board and hierarchical members of the organization find change necessary. In most districts, there is enough stabilization of central office and building level staff to insure continued sponsorship of plateau administrators and this support serves to maintain the equilibrium of the group over a long period

of time.

For those who are vertically inclined, the pathway is somewhat more precarious and certainly more physically and emotionally demanding. Adequate academic preparation is recognized as a fundamental necessity. There is little excuse for individuals to be without credentials and training if they have expectations for hierarchical positions in the organization. It is important to recognize that one is on stage in a position and that only an audience of one is necessary in order to be recognized for potential and recommended for promotion. The superintendent, in most cases, is the key person in the organization who must say to others in one way or another that a particular individual "shows potential," "has merit," "needs to be moved," "is alert and bright." Glowing reports of the immediate supervisor are usually inadequate by themselves for actualizing upward mobility of an individual, but it is helpful if sponsorship can move in a continuous line. Otherwise, the highest sponsoring individual places himself in a high risk situation should a candidate's potential fail to materialize. Willingness to change positions frequently will enhance vertical mobility. Those who are reluctant to move when the invitations come or when the opportunities exist may find themselves locked into their positions. Frequently, upward mobility and stability within an organization are incompatible.

Because women are isolated from the policy-making, decision-making groups and because they are overtly identified as a peculiar kind of female, women must come to grips with their images and very real barriers if they wish to pursue vertical mobility. The barriers can be overcome in several ways provided women pursue the courses identified below:

1- Formal preparation at a recognized graduate school is basic. Coupled with the formal preparation is a need to adhere to the basic foundation qualities expected of the "organization man" in our society: neatness, punctuality, appropriate grooming and dress, and observances of the group's protocol and expectations.

2- Understanding and involvement in the informal network system is necessary. Foremost is the need for recognition, encouragement and sponsorship -- preferably from the superintendent. It is only through the confidence of superiors and the acceptance and influence of colleagues that the sponsorship flourishes.

Superintendents indicate that sponsorship of women involves more risks than for men and they are therefore reluctant to invite individuals into the organization who are likely to create problems for them. It is at this point that women need to find ways to be involved in the informal network system. One male administrator said, "If a man (administrator) asks you to go to lunch or to have a drink after work, do it." Another male administrator declared that "women get involved in all kinds of committees and groups which are of no help to them whatsoever. They should be political and choose to be involved with people and groups which can be helpful when they need them." It appears that women in their efforts to be womanly, proper and professional are perceived as aloof and elect not to get involved in the informal network system even when there is opportunity. Furthermore, in their desire to be noticed, they tend to serve on any committee when they are asked or when they have the opportunity to volunteer, and therefore often end up doing the subordinate tasks by their own initiative. Vertically

mobile men will not seek them out because the women have no valuable informal network communications - no contacts - and consequently, no bargaining or exchange system. The women remain isolated.

3- Knowledge and use of the informal networks, coupled with limited power of affirmative action laws should induce more consideration of women than in the past. Women must not rely upon the laws to protect their rights nor to gain professional momentum for them. It is well known throughout the informal network system that the affirmative action laws can be easily circumvented. "There was a time," a superintendent commented, "when you could hire the best person for the job. Now you must consider women. You can still hire the one you want but now the process is long and complicated."

4- Once one has gained entry into the administrative ranks, it is important to stay in the field. Intermittent patterns of employment have an adverse effect upon opportunities for promotion. The exception which enjoys favor is that of leaving a position in order to return to graduate school. But then, in most cases, the administrators do not return to the same district when they return to the work force, thereby causing the effect a break of continuity would have had in those instances to be unknown. The problem is that once women leave their occupational spaces, the spaces are difficult to regain and women in the process fulfill the stereotyped image that they are not interested in a career - just a job.

The burden of overcoming barriers which prevent women from entering and advancing within the hierarchy of school administration does not belong to women alone. The organization itself must come to grips with its needs, its degree of flexibility, ability to offer equal opportunities, and its

sophistication in taking advantage of the skills and brain power which has usually limited women to subordinate positions.

How one reacts to becoming a place-holder depends upon whether one is ascending in the excursion lift or returning to the stability of the ground. For those who are being groomed, there is little concern. Positions are usually held for short periods of time and the persons view themselves and are viewed by others as "on the way up." Individuals who view their (place-holding) positions as being suspended midway between where they are and where they want to be frequently become anxious and frustrated. The anxiety and frustration expands into bitterness (albeit behind a mask of organizational protocol) when sponsorship is withdrawn and the individuals are unable to continue in positions of growth which entail additional responsibility and prestige. It is at this point that place-holding candidates need to make some choices: (1) move to another organization within the same field, (2) change field focus, (3) adapt to the place-holding position concept as the jobs are assigned and remember at the same time that all is not lost. As new superintendents are employed, the processes of sponsorship and selective recruitment can be set in motion again.

The process of sponsorship is nebulous, intangible and often unrecognized for the power it has in facilitating or hindering career development. Ways need to be devised to unobtrusively study career patterns of specific men and women over a period of time, compare behaviors, personal choices, organizational needs and conditions under which sponsorship continues or withdraws and to substantiate the position that sponsorship is crucial to the initiation and implementation of processes which facilitate career development.

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